

**SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG ESL AND TESL
STUDENTS IN UNIMAS**

by

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ABSTRACT

Self-regulated Learning Strategies Among ESL and TESL Students in UNIMAS

Saw Lee Wei

This study explored the self-regulated learning strategies used by the English-as-a-second-language (ESL) and teach-English-as-a-second-language (TESL) students in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. The purposes of this study are to investigate what self-regulated learning strategies are preferred and non-preferred by ESL and TESL students, what demographic characteristics (gender, age, and course) have determined on the choice of self-regulated learning strategies, and which self-regulated learning strategies has influenced the achievement (CGPA) of ESL and TESL students in UNIMAS. Sixty-nine ESL students and one hundred and thirteen TESL students participated in this study. This study used survey design and data was collected using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The analysis showed that cognitive learning strategy ($M=3.68$) was most frequently used self-regulated learning strategy by the ESL and TESL students, both the male and female students, from the age groups of 15-24, 25-34, and 35-44. Time and study environment management strategy ($M=3.38$) was the least frequently used self-regulated learning strategy by the male and female students from the age groups of 25-34 and 35-44. Female students and ESL students used more self-regulated learning strategies than male students and TESL students. Gender did show different favor in using self-regulated learning strategies. Besides, there were significant differences ($p > .05$) in self-regulated learning strategies between the age groups. Students with different CGPA did show different favor in using self-regulated learning strategies. Implications and suggestions for further research were put forward.

ABSTRAK

Strategik Pembelajaran Pengurusan Diri di kalangan pelajar-pelajar ESL dan TESL di UNIMAS

Saw Lee Wei

Kajian ini meneroka Self-regulated Learning Strategies yang diguna oleh pelajar-pelajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (ESL) dan mengajar bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (TESL) di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Tujuan-tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengesan apakah Self-regulated Learning Strategies yang digemari oleh pelajar-pelajar ESL dan TESL, apakah trat-ciri demografik (jantina, umur, dan khusus) yang menentukan pilihan Self-regulated Learning Strategies, dan Self-regulated Learning Strategies yang manakah mempunyai pengaruh terhadap akademik (CGPA) di kalangan pelajar-pelajar ESL dan TESL di UNIMAS. Terdapat enam puluh strategi pelajar-pelajar ESL (17 lelaki, 50 perempuan) dan seratus tiga belas pelajar-pelajar TESL (18 lelaki, 95 perempuan) mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini menggunakan rekabentuk survey dan data-data dikumpul dengan menggunakan Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). Analisis menunjukkan strategic pembelajaran kognitif ($M=3.68$) merupakan kategori self-regulated learning strategy yang paling kerap diguna oleh pelajar-pelajar ESL dan TESL, pelajar-pelajar lelaki dan perempuan, daripada golongan umur 15-24, 25-34, dan 35-44. Strategik pengurusan masa dan tempat mempelajari ($M=3.38$) merupakan kategori yang paling kurang diguna oleh pelajar-pelajar lelaki dan perempuan dan pelajar-pelajar daripada golongan umur 25-34 dan 35-44. Pelajar-pelajar perempuan dan pelajar-pelajar ESL didapati menggunakan lebih banyak self-regulated learning strategies berbanding dengan pelajar-pelajar lelaki dan pelajar-pelajar TESL. Jantina menunjukkan kegemaran yang berbeza dalam menggunakan self-regulated learning strategies. Di samping itu, terdapat perbezaan ($p < .05$) dalam penggunaan self-regulated learning strategies bagi umur yang berbeza. Pelajar-pelajar dengan CGPA yang berbeza menunjukkan kegemaran yang berbeza dalam menggunakan Strategik Pembelajaran Pengurusan Diri. Implikasi-implikasi dan cadangan-cadangan bagi kajian di masa depan telah dipaparkan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SRL	Self-regulated Learning
ESL	English as a Second Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UNIMAS	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
MSLQ	Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significant of the study and operational definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Educational psychology has shifted from behaviorism to cognitivism since the 1960s (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1995; Bredo, 1997). Different learning strategies have been integrated into individual learning needs in order to achieve individual learning goals. Among the areas, self-regulated learning has become a frequent area of educational research (Chen, 2002). Self-regulated learning is a process where the learner is actively involved in monitoring and controlling his behavior and resources, motivation and emotion, as well as the cognitive strategies for learning (Svinicki, n.d.).

Today, self-regulated learning has received further concentration when compare to the past decades. Nowadays, distance learning and e-learning have gained their recognition among learners and ultimately can be considered as the production of self-regulated learning. This is due to the fact that learning in the online environment

(distance learning and e-learning) requires the learners to set their goals and develop appropriate methods to direct and manage the learning process in order to achieve their goals (Anderton, 2006). Besides, Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) stated as follows:

“An area that lends itself well to self regulation is *distance learning*, where instruction originates at one site and is transmitted to learners at distant sites....

Self-regulation seems critical due to the high degree of student independence deriving from the instructor’s physical absence. In particular, we recommend research on the type of self-regulatory strategies that allow good distance learning” (p. 230).

Apart from that, self-regulated learning can become a useful tool in the resource-limited or big classroom where the learners need to have extra revision and study by their own.

For over two decades, social learning researchers had conducted research on such self-regulatory processes as self-reinforcement (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1967; Bandura & Kupers, 1964), standard setting (Mischel & Liebert, 1966), delay of gratification (Mischel, 1981; Mischel & Bandura, 1965), goal setting (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Schunk, 1985), self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1982a; Schunk, 1984; Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981), self-instructions (Schunk, 1986; Schunk & Rice, 1984), and self-evaluation (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, 1986) (as cited in Zimmerman, 1989). Several self-regulation components had been identified by Schunk (2005), such as goal setting, motivation, volitional strategies, self-efficacy, self-reflection. Pintrich (1999) had mentioned three general categories of strategies in the self-regulated learning model, such as cognitive learning strategies, self-regulatory strategies to control cognition, and resource management strategies.

There are a few systematic analytical studies of students who had experienced self-regulated learning in higher education. More studies need to be conducted to ascertain the use of various self-regulation components that can influence students' self-efficacy for learning, their interest in the task, and the goals they adopt.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Schools and public universities in Malaysia are facing the scenario of lacking resources and the restriction by a large amount of students and greater students diversity in the classrooms (Schunk, 2005). As a result, the potential of the students cannot be fully developed. Even in the urban areas, tuition centres are no longer the place for small group tutorials where the instructor can fully pay attention to the weakness of a single individual. Learners are perceived to have more responsibility for their own learning nowadays. Therefore, self-regulated learning is being promoted in order to meet different learning needs and learning goals of an individual. In general, students can be described as self-regulated to the extent that they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process (Zimmerman, 1986, 1989).

The purposes of this study are to investigate what self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by ESL and TESL students, what demographic characteristics (gender and age) have determined the choice of self-regulated learning strategies, and which self-regulated learning strategies has influenced the achievement (CGPA) of ESL and TESL students in UNIMAS.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to find out the self-regulated learning strategies used by the students. These self-regulated learning strategies are divided into six categories: cognitive learning strategies, metacognitive self-regulation strategies, time and environment management strategies, effort regulation strategies, peer learning strategies and help-seeking strategies.

The objectives of this research are to investigate: (a) the preferred self-regulated learning strategies used by the students, (b) the preferred self-regulated learning strategies used according to the courses (ESL or TESL), (c) the preferred self-regulated learning strategies used according to the gender, (d) the preferred self-regulated learning strategies used according to the age, and (e) the preferred self-regulated learning strategies used according to CGPA.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are as followed:

- (1) Which self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by the students?
- (2) Which self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by the students according to the courses?
- (3) Which self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by the students according to the gender?
- (4) Which self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by the students according to the age?

(5) Which self-regulated learning strategies are preferred by the students according to CGPA?

1.5 Significance of the Study

According to Zimmerman (2001), learners' learning skills and abilities did not fully determine their success in academic achievement but self-regulated learning is one of the important factors for better achievement. Learning objectives are often fixed at the outset and limiting any individual goal orientation in the resource-limited and big classrooms. Therefore, an alternative learning strategy, which is the self-regulated learning strategies, is required to monitor the students' self-learning.

This research is important as it promotes understanding of the concept of self-regulation in the development of goal setting, metacognition, and time management (Chen, 2002). The result from the research can give an idea to people who are interested in this area and to the school teachers to teach and promote the ways that help the students to become self-regulated learners (Coppola, 1995; McCombs, 1989, as cited in Chen, 2002) such as to control their behaviors and affective to improve their learning and academic performance. Besides, the result of the research can become a reference for different levels of students to apply the self-regulated learning strategies in their learning needs.

Self-regulated learning is critical for college and universities students as well as lifelong learners as they have great control over their time schedule, and how they approach their studying and learning (Pintrich, 1995). Six factors that prepared someone to become a lifelong learner had identified by Slay (1997); four of these strategies are

related directly to self-regulated learning: (a) Become information literate by locating, managing, and evaluating information, (b) Understand limitations of and evaluate personal knowledge, (c) Understand personal strengths and weaknesses as well as preferred learning style, and (d) Have knowledge of a range of strategies to achieve learning goals (Anderton, 2006).

Apart from that, researches about gender and self-regulated learning were also being carried out. Several researchers such as Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons (1990) and Joo et al. (2000) found that females used more self-regulated learning strategies such as in Nevgi's study (2002), the result revealed that females rated cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as the use of keywords and advance organizers, constructive thinking strategies, and finding essential point higher than the males. However, in this study too, gender did not explain the use of resource management strategies (one of the self-regulated learning strategies). Therefore, one of the objectives in this research is to investigate the most frequently use self-regulated learning strategies according to the gender. The result can be used to reinforce the previous researches' conclusion.

1.6 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

(i) Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulation (or self-regulated learning) is “an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment” (Pintrich, 2000, p. 453).

(ii) Self-Regulation Components

Several self-regulation components had been identified by Schunk (2005), which are goal setting, motivation, volitional strategies, self-efficacy, and self-reflection.

(iii) Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

Actions and processes directed at acquiring information or skill that involve agency, purpose, and instrumentality perceptions by learners. They include such methods as organizing and transforming information, self-consequating, seeking information, and rehearsing or using memory aids (Zimmerman, 1989).

(iv) Achievement

Achievement is determined with the cumulative grade point average for every semester (CGPA).

The grades can be categorized into:

Table 1.1

Range of CGPA

Grade	Range of mark (%)	Point of grade (CGPA)
A	80-100	4.00
A-	75-79	3.67
B+	70-74	3.33
B	65-69	3.00
B-	60-64	2.67
C+	55-59	2.33
C	50-54	2.00
C-	45-50	1.50
D	40-44	1.00
F	<40	0.00

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this section, several aspects will be discussed. These include the learning environments in TESL & ESL course, the definitions and studies done about self-regulated learning (SRL), SRL strategies, SRL in English as a second language (ESL) context, SRL strategies in ESL context, SRL strategies and achievement, and SRL in the relationship with gender.

2.1 Learning Environment in ESL & TESL Course

ESL (English as a Second Language) and TESL (Teach English as a Second Language) are two courses offered by UNIMAS for undergraduates who are involved in the teaching and learning of English as a second language. These courses involve different types of learning such as listening to lectures, taking notes, practicing the skills during tutorials, taking tests, going for teaching practice, acquiring and applying computer knowledge, carrying a research and self-managing activities such as reading, participating in group discussions and completing assignments and projects on time (Buku panduan pelajar 03/04, 2003).

Since these courses involve different types of learning, it is assumed that different learning strategies are required for different learning situations as Weinstein and Mayer (1986) suggested that in order to be succeeded in a particular learning situation, a particular learning strategy is required, and this learning strategy may not be appropriate for other types of learning situations (as cited in Chen, 2002, p. 13).

2.2 Self-Regulated Learning (Self-regulation)

Self-regulated learning can be defined differently in different contexts. From a social cognitive perspective, Zimmerman had defined self-regulated learning as “self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals” (as cited in Perels, Gurtler, and Schmitz, 2005). According to Pintrich (1999), self-regulated learning is the use of various cognitive and metacognitive strategies to control and regulate the learning by the learners based on the goals they have set.

In the second language acquisition context, self-regulated learning is “a person’s continuous adjustment of the use of language-learning strategies to achieve the self-set goals through interactions with their peers and adults across social and cultural contexts” (Wang, 2004, p.14).

Studies show that students who self-regulated their learning depict the following characteristics (Montalvo & Torres, 2004).

1. Students are familiar with a series of cognitive strategies such as repetition, elaboration, and organization and know how to use them. By doing so, they are able to attend to, transform, organize, elaborate and recover information.

2. Students are able to apply the metacognition strategies to plan, control and direct their mental processes toward the achievement of personal goals.
3. Students demonstrate a series of motivational beliefs and adaptive emotions, for instance, a high sense of academic self-efficacy, in which they believe they have the capability to have good performance, the adoption of learning goals, the development of positive emotions towards tasks, (e.g. joy, satisfaction, enthusiasm). Besides, they are capable to control, adjust, and modify these beliefs and emotions, to meet the requirements of the task and of the specific learning situation.
4. Students will plan and control the time and effort to be used on task, create and structure favorable learning environments, such as finding a quiet place to study. Besides, when they are facing problems, they will seek help from teachers and classmates.
5. Students put their efforts to participate in the control and regulation of academic tasks, classroom climate and structure (e.g. how one will be evaluated, tasks requirements, the design of class assignments, organization of working teams), in the extent that the context allows it.
6. Students apply volitional strategies while performing academic tasks, aimed at avoiding external and internal distractions. They do so in order to maintain their concentration, effort and motivation.

2.3 Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) came out with 14 categories of self-regulated learning strategies from their study done with a group of high school students. The strategies and their definitions are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

Categories/Strategies	Definitions
1. Self-evaluation	Statements indicating student-initiated evaluations of the quality or progress of their work; e.g., "I check over my work to make sure I did it right."
2. Organizing and transforming	Statements indicating student-initiated overt or covert rearrangement of instructional materials to improve learning; e.g., "I make an outline before I write my paper."
3. Goal-setting and planning	Statements indicating students' setting of educational goals or subgoals and planning for sequencing, timing, and completing activities related to those goals; e.g., "first, I start studying two weeks before exams, and I pace myself."
4. Seeking information	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to secure further task information from nonsocial sources when undertaking an assignment; e.g., "Before beginning to write the paper, I go to the library to get as much information as possible concerning the topic."
5. Keeping records and monitoring	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to record events or results; e.g., "I took notes of the class discussions"; "I kept a list of the words I got wrong."
6. Environmental structuring	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to select or arrange the physical setting to make learning easier; e.g., "I isolate myself from anything that distract me"; "I turned off the radio so I can concentrate on what I am doing."
7. Self-consequating	Statements indicating student arrangement or imagination or rewards or punishment for success or failure; e.g., "If I do well on a test, I treat myself to a movie."
8. Rehearsing and memorizing	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to memorize material by overt or covert practice; e.g., "In preparing for a math test, I keep writing the formula down until I remember it."
9-11. Seeking social assistance	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to solicit help from <i>peers</i> (9), <i>teachers</i> (10), and <i>adults</i> (11); e.g., "If I have problems with math assignments, I ask a friend to help."
12-14. Reviewing records	Statements indicating student-initiated efforts to reread <i>notes</i> (12), <i>tests</i> (13), or <i>textbooks</i> (14) to prepare for class or further testing; e.g., "I read my class notes again before I go for a test."

(Adopted from Zimmerman, 1989, p. 17)

According to the Pintrich's model (1999), self-regulated learning strategies can be categorized into three general types: (1) cognitive learning strategies, (2) metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies, and (3) resource management strategies. The present study will be based on this model.

2.3.1 Cognitive Learning Strategies

Cognitive learning involves complex mental processes which are mind, memory, attention, thinking, motivation, reflection, language and problem-solving (Zimmerman, 1989). Cognitive strategies are the use of basic and complex strategies for the processing of information (Garcia & Pintrich, 1995) and manipulating or transforming of learning material (Wong, 2005).

Rehearsal, memorizing, elaboration, organizing and transforming are the cognitive learning strategies identified by Weinstein and Mayer (as cited in Pintrich, 1999, p. 460).

Rehearsal strategies involve the "recitation of items to be learned or the saying of words aloud as one reads a piece of text" (Pintrich, 1999). An example of the rehearsal activity is when students highlight or underline important information in the text and keep this information active in the working memory. An example of memorizing is "In preparing for a math test, I keep writing the formula down until I remember it." (Zimmerman, 1989).

Elaboration strategies include "paraphrasing or summarizing the material to be learned, creating analogies, generative note-taking (where the student actually reorganizes and connects ideas in their notes in contrast to passive, linear note-taking),

explaining the ideas in the material to be learned to someone else, and question asking and answering” (Pintrich, 1999).

Organizing and transforming is a deeper processing strategy, it involves some activities such as “selecting the main idea from text, outlining the text or material to be learned, and using a variety of specific techniques for selecting and organizing the ideas in the material (e.g. sketching, a network or map of the important ideas, identifying the prose or expository structures of texts)” (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

2.3.2 Metacognitive and Self-Regulatory Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are “strategies that students use to exercise executive control, planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluation of their own learning process” (Wong, 2005).

There are three general types of metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies: planning, monitoring, and regulating (Pintrich, 1999).

Planning activities involve “setting goals for studying, skimming a text before reading, generating questions before reading a text, and doing a task analysis of the problem” (Pintrich, 1999).

Monitoring is a phase where “the student becomes aware of his or her state of cognition, motivation, emotions, use of time and effort, as well as conditions of the task and of the context” (Montalvo & Torres, 2004). Monitoring activities include paying attention while reading a text or listening to a lecture, asking questions to see whether he/she has understood what has been read (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, as cited in Montalvo & Torres, 2004, p. 6), and using test-taking strategies (i.e. monitoring speed